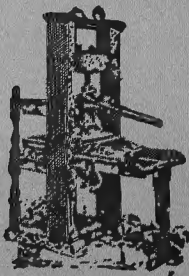


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The Rossville Mission Press



by Bruce Peel

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ROSSVILLE MISSION PRESS

The invention of the Cree
syllabic characters, and
the first printing
in Rupert's Land

by

Bruce Peel

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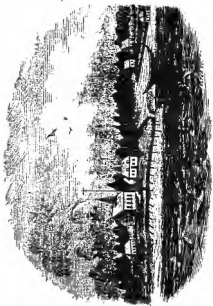
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STATIONARY VAPOR-ENGINE AT LIVERPOOL



For Alison

"The Rossville Mission Press" is the twentieth title put out by Osiris Publications, Montreal. It has been published in an edition limited to 220 copies, consisting of 20 copies numbered from I to XX, for private distribution, and 200 copies numbered from 1 to 200, which are for sale.

This is No.

9

Printed in Montreal, 1974, by Osiris Publications.

Text paper Strathmore writing.

Cover an exclusive Fabriano Hand-made cover-stock.

PREFACE

Many years ago in reading the story of the Reverend James Evans and his invention of the Cree syllabic script I was intrigued by the question of what had been published by the Rossville Mission Press. Sketches of Evans' life are vague in recording the actual imprints, while little has been written on the work of William Mason as a printer.

A few imprints are to be found in scattered libraries in Canada, Britain, and the United States, but since some disappeared long ago, the calendaring of the Rossville imprints has to depend on scattered references in missionary letters and journals.

This account of the Rossville Mission Press is largely a consolidation of my two earlier articles, supplemented by some additional information. "Rossville Mission Press: Press, prints and translators" appeared in the *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*, vol. 1, 1962, while the second article, "Frustrations of the Missionary-Printer of Rossville: Reverend William Mason," was printed in the *Bulletin of the Committee on Archives of the United Church of Canada*, No. 18, 1965. The author recognizes his indebtedness to the editors of these two publications for permission to quote freely from the articles.

The principal source of new material is the archives of the Methodist Missionary Society in London, England, where the Reverend E.B. Thorp kindly copied for me those references to printing scattered through the letters of Evans and Mason. The author also acknowledges material supplied by the Reverend Arthur G. Reynolds, former archivist of the United Church of Canada. Without the assistance of these gentlemen the full story of the mission press in the wilderness of Rupert's Land could not have been pieced together.



REV. JAMES EVANS.

ROSSVILLE MISSION PRESS

The Cree syllabic script which contributed so much to the spreading of Christianity among the Indians of western and northern Canada was invented by the Reverend James Evans. During his residence at Rossville, near Norway House north of Lake Winnipeg, as superintendent of Wesleyan Methodist missions in Rupert's Land (or, as Methodist documents refer to it, Hudson's Bay Territory), Evans perfected the Cree syllabic characters. He printed some hymns, and perhaps a few passages of Scripture, on an improvised press between 1840 and 1845. The printing press which Evans requested from England did not arrive until the autumn of 1845, a few months before his departure. Thus it was under the superintendency of his successor, the Reverend William Mason, that the printing of religious literature for the Indians got fully under way at Rossville.

Mr. Evans' invention of the Cree syllabic characters was an act of genius. These characters had their origin in the missionary's earlier studies of the Ojibway language, which was also of the Algonquian linguistic family. In 1836 he had invented an Ojibway syllabic alphabet, but the scheme had been rejected by the Canadian Bible Society in Toronto¹. The script he gave the Cree was no doubt an adaptation of his earlier Ojibway syllabary.

At Norway House in 1840, realizing the problem of evangelizing among scattered nomadic Indian bands, he turned to the printed word as the most efficacious means of propagating the Christian faith.

The inventor of the Cree syllabary used a variety of triangles, angles, arcs and pothooks (at first ten in number, but later reduced to nine) each with four positions — up, down, left and right — to depict the thirty-six open vowel sounds which largely constitute the musical language of the Cree. Thus, an acute angle in four positions was used to

represent "pay, pe, po, pah" respectively. In addition to these symbols, Evans used a number of accent-like marks to indicate consonants used as terminals. The use of each of the nine symbols in four positions gave the syllabary a mnemonic quality which helps to explain its success.

In its early form the syllabary² repeated each symbol in each position twice, once as a solid line, and once as a broken line, to indicate a short and long vowel respectively; later a dot over any syllable indicated a long vowel.

Critics of the Cree syllabic script, mainly other missionaries, pointed out that while the Cree language was composed largely of syllables there were separate consonantal sounds, and that these sounds could not be indicated with any preciseness by the script.³ However, the critics had to acknowledge the effectiveness of the scheme, as evinced by the ease with which Indians without any schooling could learn to read. Within twenty years the scheme had gained general acceptance among missionaries and was adapted to other tribal languages in the prairie and northern regions of what in 1870 became part of Canada.

The Reverend James Evans arrived at his new post, Rossville, by canoe from York Factory on the evening of September 5, 1840. A man with an inventive mind and great vigour, Evans was, within days of his arrival, investigating the possibility of setting up as a printer. His journal for September 28 recorded:

For a fortnight I have been endeavouring to cast type, to print the Cree language; but every attempt hitherto made has failed. I have no proper materials, neither type-metal, nor any other thing requisite: I hope, however, to conquer the difficulties and to begin printing the Cree language in a few weeks or months at the furthest⁴.

The missionary's journal over the next few weeks described his further efforts.

(September 30) I cut types in lead of two characters, and took moulds in clay, chalk, putty, sand, and tried some other fruitless experiments.

(October 13) I cast a plate of hardened lead, polished it, and commenced cutting the Cree alphabet, making a sort of stereotype plate.

(October 15) Last night I finished the alphabet plate, and to-day printed a few sheets. Several of the boys know all the letters, having written the alphabet for each, and they are much pleased with their new books, but not much more so than I am myself.

The missionary persevered with his experiments in the making of type, and by November 11 was able to record-

My types answer well. I have got excellent type, considering the country and materials they make at least a tolerably good impression. The letter or character I cut in finely-polished oak. I filed out of one side of an inch-square iron bar the square of the body of the type, and after placing the bar with the notch over the letter, I applied another polished bar to the face of the mould, and poured in lead, after it had been repeatedly melted in order to harden it. These required a little dressing on the face, and filing to the uniform square and length, and answer well.

The Reverend Egerton R. Young, in charge of Roseville Mission some twenty years after Evans, was undoubtedly quoting local tradition when describing the materials used by Evans for his type and press.² The type came from the thin sheets of lead which lined the tea chests shipped in by the Hudson's Bay Company. Young said that after carving models of syllabic characters Evans made casts of them in soft clay and poured the melted lead into these casts. Chimney soot mixed with sturgeon oil provided the first ink. His press was the jackscrew generally used by the traders for packing furs into bales for shipment. Such was the primitive type and press from which the first Rupert's Land imprints were taken.³

Tradition would have it that James Evans did his first printing not on paper, but on birch bark. The Reverend John Maclean in his biography of Evans states that the latter's brother, Dr. Ephraim Evans, in 1889 had in his possession some old books made of birch bark and others printed on paper.⁶ There is good reason to believe that the reference is to the three copies of the 1841 hymn book now in the possession of Victoria University, Toronto. Miss Margaret Ray, in her introduction to the facsimile edition of this hymn book, states that the copies at Victoria are printed on coarse paper; the paper stock used for one copy, however, is more primitive than the other two, so that its appearance could give the impression of birch bark. She suggests that the whole birch bark story may stem from the condition of this one copy.⁷

In support of birch bark as the first printing material was its availability. Since many of the products of the mission press evidently were single pages or sheets on which was printed a hymn or a prayer, birch bark would be as serviceable as paper; indeed, it might be more durable than a single sheet of paper. Bound into a volume, birch bark might not be as satisfactory. In support of the theory that only paper was used at Rossville is the small page-size of the 1841 hymn book, which, if typical of this press, would suggest that the quantity of paper involved in the press's early output was not great.

In drawing up a calendar of Rossville unprints, completeness will probably never be attained because of the destruction of James Evans' papers⁸ and because very few unprints have survived.

*Long ago these first crude little volumes disappeared,
but they served their purpose well, and were a joy and
benediction to many.⁹*

No.1: Cree Syllabary (October 15th, 1840)

A few copies were printed on that date for the school, but in all probability more copies were run off in succeeding weeks. The syllabary was printed from the stereotype plate Evans had carved, but later imprints were printed with movable type.

No.2: Hymn: Jesus My All to Heaven is Gone (November 11th, 1840)

I have to-day struck off three hundred copies of the first three verses, making a small page.¹⁰

No.3 Hymn Behold the Saviour of Mankind (November 17th, 1840)

Of this hymn, Evans wrote that he had printed two hundred and fifty copies.

My press is very rude, but I am anticipating better days.

No 4 Hymn: Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow (December 3rd, 1840)

On the day he printed the above hymn, Evans described in his journal the ease with which the pupils in the mission school learned to read.

The Indians and children sing these hymns well, and several read with some fluency. The short time which is required to learn to read and to write arises from there being no such thing as learning to spell, every character in the alphabet being a syllable, so that when these are learned, all is learned. Several of the boys and young men can write any word in the language, seldom committing an error.

The same journal entry continues by describing his printing achievements, and his plans for the future.

I have now printed about two thousand pages of hymns, &c., and on my return from my winter tour, by God's blessing, I shall print the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, Commandments, and the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, not forgetting the Rules of our Society.

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184 Y . o

Hymns - No.7

No.5: Lord's Prayer (late February, 1841)

There is no evidence that Evans printed this prayer, other than the knowledge that he had a Cree translation, and, having it, would run off copies on his press. On a winter tour of his territory, the missionary visited Beaver Creek House and enjoyed the hospitality of the trader and his wife, Mr and Mrs. McKay. In his journal for February 6, while at the post, he wrote:

Mrs. McKay, an excellent Cree speaker, kindly furnished me with a translation of the Lord's prayer.

No.6 Cree Syllabic Hymn Book (before June 11th, 1841)
16 p.

I have made a fount of Indian type, press and every thing necessary and besides making nearly four months voyage have printed about 5,000 pages in the Muskego language, among other things: a small volume of hymns which is bound, a hundred copies of 16 pages each ¹¹

No.7: Hymns: Swampy Indians: Their Speech Fish River, 1841 20 p. (incl inside covers) 12 ½ cm.

This unprint is probably an enlarged edition of No. 6, with a title page added to give the booklet a more finished appearance. A copy in Victoria University, Toronto, which was reissued in the facsimile series of the Bibliographical Society of Canada, has on the front cover a syllabary, on the back cover an elementary reading lesson, while the front inside cover is the title page.

Three copies of this unprint are in the possession of Victoria University. While the text is identical in all copies, there are differences in paper, binding, and cover. Another copy is in the Ayer Collection of Americana in the Newberry Library in Chicago. The copy is in an elk skin wrapper, with the syllabary on the front and back covers. This copy once belonged to James Constantine Pilling, the early bibliographer of Indian languages.

When the Hudson's Bay Company's supply ship left York Factory in September, 1841, it carried a set of Evans' syllabic type. The missionary was forwarding the set to the Wesleyan Missionary Society with the request that a font of type be cast in England and sent out to him. The missionary's brother, Dr Ephraim Evans, in a letter written many years later makes reference to the arrival of the type in England.

I was in England, in 1841, when a set of his homemade types was received by the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and took some part with them in obtaining permission from the Directors of the Hudson Bay Company to have a font cast, and, with a press, sent out to Norway House, pledges being given that they would be used only for our mission work. Their arrival was cause of great joy and thanksgiving to God.¹²

(Contrary to the impression left in this reminiscence that a printing press was sent out promptly, three years were to elapse before the press arrived at Rossville, and then the missionary was too ill to put it into operation.)

In September, 1842, Evans was at York Factory eagerly awaiting the annual supply ship on which would be his consignment of the font of Cree syllabic type. Letitia Hargrave, wife of the factor at York, in a letter dated the 20th of the month wrote that

when he returns to Norway House he is to begin a printing press which he seems to have no doubt about being able to construct & then he is to publish at a great rate.¹³

By the following year Evans had gathered around him an able group of teachers and translators. John Sinclair was the son of a fur trader and a Cree mother. Henry B. Steinhauer¹⁴ was a full-blooded Ojibway, well educated in Ontario. Both men were to give many years of devoted service to the missionary cause. At Rossville they were engaged for several years in teaching and translating. According to their later claims they were responsible for translating the Bible into

Cree syllabics. The work of translating was done in the years from 1843 to 1850, while the two were at Rossville.

The other members of the translating team were the Reverend William Mason and his bride, Sophia Thomas, the half-Cree daughter of Governor Thomas. The Masons, who were later to see the Bible through the press in England, joined the Rossville Mission in 1843.

Evans' son-in-law, John McLean, in his reminiscences claimed that the Hudson's Bay Company opposed a printing press being established in Rupert's Land, no doubt fearing that it might in time become an instrument to foment political change. According to McLean, the Company, finding that Evans was not deterred by the absence of a proper press, finally forwarded the one he had requested from England. However, the Company stipulated that every thing must have the imprimatur of the chief officer at nearby Norway House.¹⁶

On June 10, 1845, Evans wrote from Fort Garry to Sir George Simpson, the governor of the Hudson's Bay Company:

*I have not yet received the printing press, with the types in the native language. I should be willing to accept the condition that nothing but matters of a decidedly religious character should be printed.*¹⁷

The long-desired printing press arrived at York Factory on the supply ship of 1845, and later that autumn was brought up to Rossville by York boat.¹⁷ The hand press was an old one, bearing 1786 as its date of manufacture.¹⁸ In the absence of a description of the press it must be assumed that it was a wooden one; the iron press was not perfected by Lord Stanhope until about 1800. (Mason was later to complain that

*Our Press is quite worn out, and the screw is broken).*¹⁹

The printing press arrived too late for Evans, the inventor of the Cree syllabic script, to fulfill his dream of

spreading the Christian message by means of the printed word among bands of Indians scattered in the northern wilderness. It is doubtful if any printing was undertaken on the recently arrived press during the missionary's last months at Rossville. He was still depressed by the death of a promising young convert, Thomas Hassel (killed when Evans' gun accidentally discharged), dismayed by the allegation of moral turpitude involving Indian women,²⁰ and ill with a serious kidney ailment.²¹ Mr. Evans left Rossville the following summer for England to defend himself against the morals charge at the Wesleyan Methodist Assembly, and to seek medical aid. He died suddenly in England on November 2, 1846.

Reviewing Evans' career as a printer, this writer assumes that in addition to the seven unprints listed above, other items were printed in the years 1842 to 1845. The crude press probably operated only sporadically, and the printing was short passages of Scripture, a few prayers, and some additional hymns.

The Reverend William Mason succeeded Evans as superintendent of missions at Rossville in the summer of 1846, and was soon engaged in printing a new edition of the hymn book.

No. 8. Hymn Book. New edition. (Autumn, 1846)

The precise title is not known. One hundred copies were run off the press, and by the following June 26 the edition was out of print.²²

The new superintendent found when he started printing that he did not have sufficient syllabic type to set up more than two pages at a time. And Evans had taken the type matrices to England, with the intention of having a large supply of type cast from them. With his death, the matrices were misplaced.²³

The next year, 1847, Mason, in a letter dated June 26, wrote to the Wesleyan mission secretaries in London, saying that two hundred copies of a prayer book translated by Chief Factor J.E. Harriott had been printed.

No.9: Harriott, John Edward, *translator*

The Sunday service of the Wesleyan Methodists
(Spring, 1847) 17 p. 17 ½ cm.

The copy in the New York Public Library has on the leaf before the title page a manuscript note "Norway House, Prince Rupert's Land, 18 June, 1847 " The title page has a vignette of a church. The title page is in English, the text in Cree syllabic.

In the letter Mason made a request which was to be repeated in other letters in later years, a request which was apparently never filled "Please send me an inkball".³⁴ On hand presses of the kind in use at Rosville, the inking was done by means of dabbing with sheepskin pads or pellets. In 1848 Mr. Mason again stressed the need to send out an inkball from England. Four years later he wrote:

*We have no proper printing ball. Deer skin balls do not answer. Please send us a ball in the Spring.*³⁵

In 1853 the missionary-printer reported happily that he had been able to make an inkball and a roller, the roller was also used in inking (However two years later when the Reverend Thomas Hurlburt took over the operation of the press he complained that there was neither a black ball nor roller)

The other great handicap was, of course, the shortage of type and the matrices in which to mould type. In 1848 Mason took steps to obtain a supply of type. In his journal for February 4 he wrote:

Henry with the Fort Blacksmith have been trying to punch the Indian characters on copper pennies (?) and brass wire, as we are not able to proceed with our prin-

JOHN E. HARRIOTT Esq.

ROBIN VILLE

1947

No. 9

*ing for want of type.*²⁶

That summer the missionary visited Red River Settlement with his small daughter Mary, whose eyes needed medical attention, and took the opportunity to have matrices for Cree syllabic type made.

*On the evening of the 12th of July I embarked, taking with me the type-mould, punches, and lead, purposing, if possible, to get matrices made by the blacksmith at Red River, that during the coming winter we might proceed with our printing, and endeavour to meet the constant and earnest desires of our people for books.*²⁷

Of his stay in Red River Settlement, Mason wrote

*My time was principally taken up in the blacksmith's forge, which was about seven miles from Mr. Thomas's (where he was staying), and I am happy to say that we succeeded in making a new punch, an entire set of the matrices, and we also cast a few types in each of the matrices. Should you, however, be fortunate enough to meet with the original matrices, please to send them out, as they are much superior to any we can make in this country, and can be of no use at home.*²⁸

The matrices which Mr. Evans had taken to England were subsequently found and returned to Rossville, for Mason's journal on May 31, 1849, stated that

We have received the printed books and the matrices.

The casting of type remained difficult under the primitive manufacturing conditions at Rossville. In April, 1849, Mason wrote that they had cast an entire new font of Indian type. In January, 1852, he wrote:

In spite of all my precautions the frost has completely twisted the wooden type plate, and we cannot level the type we have cast.

Printing, he said further, was going much too slowly for want of a printer and new type. He then posed the question:

*Would it not be less expensive for the type to be cast in England, and sent out to us as we need it ?*²⁸

Now to return to the chronology of Rossville printing. Mason, in his journal for January 3, 1848 recorded:

*Busy getting the Wesleyan Discipline ready for the Press.*²⁹

Writing to the London office of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in a letter dated June 15, he reported

*We have just finished printing 450 copies of the Rules of our Society, a copy of which I enclose. This is all the printing we have been able to do, for want of the materials, and the severity of the cold during the past winter.*³¹

Later in the summer, on August 11, Mason wrote that he hoped to finish an edition of the Rules which was already in the press. Did he mean that he was printing further copies, or producing a revised edition ?

No. 10 Wesleyan Missionary Society.

Rules (Summer, 1848)

Mr. Mason, upon his return from Red River in August of 1848, began job printing for a fellow clergyman, the Reverend John Smithurst, Church Missionary Society clergy man in charge of the Indian settlement on the lower Red River.

No. 11. National Anthem (August, 1848)

Mr. Smithurst wanted the copies for his school. The anthem was in all probability printed in English.³² Smithurst was at Norway House to perform the marriage of the Reverend James Hunter of Cumberland Station (The Pas) to Jane Ross, daughter of the factor in charge of Norway House.

The second item of job printing done at Rossville for the clergyman from Red River was a trilingual dictionary or word book.

No.12: Smuthurst, John.

English-Cree-Ojibway Word Book (August, 1848)

*Its object is to aid the Indians in acquiring the English language. It contains a list of most of the nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions in common use. Each page is divided into three columns, the first containing the English, the second Cree, and the third Saulteaux. I think it will be found useful.*³²

In the same letter quoted above, Mr. Smuthurst explained how this booklet came to be printed at Rossville.

It was my intention to have sent to England this summer a small book to be printed for the use of our schools. Mr. Mason, the Wesleyan missionary at Norway House, has undertaken to get it printed for me on their press, so that a whole year will be saved.

The author expected to receive the copies of his booklet by October.

Early in the new year, 1849, Mason recorded in his journal that the group of translators and teachers at Rossville were busy preparing a new work for the press.

*(January 13) During the past week we have been revising and preparing for the Press the first part of the Conference Catechism. Translations have been made by Bro. Rundt, Mr. Steinhewer, and the Assistant Schoolmaster; and with these and with Howse's Cree Grammar we were able to proceed with the work.*³⁴

On February 3 he recorded that he had printed the catechism – 100 sheets.

No.13 No. 1 (Wesleyan Methodist) Catechism (January, 1849 One page or sheet - 100 copies printed)

Mr. Mason wrote in his journal on the last day of May that

*We have finished printing 300 copies of No. 1 Catechism, which also contains the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed.*³⁵

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 $p y L \sigma \triangleright$.
- 2 $\triangleleft \nabla \cdot Q$ $\triangleleft Q$ $p y L \sigma \triangleright$?
 $b p q$ $p \cdot n \triangleleft \cdot l d \Delta \cdot o$ $C \cdot p$ $p \nabla \Delta C \cdot o$
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- 3 $C \sigma U$ $\nabla \triangleright$, $p y L \sigma \triangleright$?
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- 5 $p y L \sigma \triangleright$ p $b \cdot p \triangleright \cdot o$ $q b$: $p \cdot q \Delta \cdot C i$?
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- 6 $f b Q \triangleright \cdot b l d Q \cdot o$ p $p y L \sigma \triangleright$ $b \cdot p \triangleright \cdot o$
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No.14: No. 1 (Wesleyan Methodist) Catechism, the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, and Apostles' Creed (May, 1849. Printed May 31 in 300 copies)

A letter from Mason to Sir John Simpson, dated June 20 indicated that the catechism was the only work to come off the press that spring.

Since Mason's letters and journals do not contain any references to paper until 1849, it may be assumed that a good supply of paper was provided with the press in 1845. The printing of the catechism exhausted the paper stock, and further printing was impossible until more was received on the Hudson's Bay Company's supply ship in the autumn of 1850.

In the first years the missionary-printer did not have proper accomodation for the press, particularly in the winter months. This was overcome with the erection of a "Printing Office and Translating House" in the summer of 1849. The men had cut and hauled the timber during the previous winter months. On August 29, writing from York Factory, Mason said that:

The new Printing Office at Rossville is nearly finished; without such a building we could not print in the winter, as the frost penetrates the metal type.³⁸

According to the Reverend Egerton R. Young, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society donated £500; this seems an excessive amount for the erection of a log building in a wilderness settlement, and there may have been a typographical error in which an extra zero was added to the sum.³⁹

The same summer season, 1849, saw the completion of the Mission's greatest translation effort to that date, the Gospel according to St. John. The manuscript was sent to England to be printed, probably because the paper on which to print it was not available. Mr. Mason wrote as follows in his letter of transmittal.

It has been carefully revised, and read over to the most intelligent of our Indian Christians, who have pronounced it "very good." Our guides in the Cree have been translations in MSS of several gentlemen in the country, Rev. Peter Jones's translation and Mr Howes' excellent Cree Grammar. We have adhered to the Authorized Version, using as helps various Commentaries, Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, and making continual reference to the original and to the Latin and French versions. Mr. H.B. Steinhewer's classical knowledge proved a great help to us. Please get the translation printed in England, and sent out next Spring. 1000 copies would be a great blessing to us.³⁰

The Wesleyan Methodists in England did not print the manuscript of St. John's Gospel. The reason could have been technical - the lack of syllabic type font, or a mould from which to manufacture a font. In consequence the missionary was busy during the winter of 1851-52 running this gospel off his press at Rossville.

In a letter of January 3, 1852, Mason described the tribulations of a wilderness printer

Our progress is much too slow, for the want of a Printer and of new type. In spite of all my precautions the frost has completely twisted the wooden type plain, and we cannot level the type we have cast. We have no proper printing ball. Deer skin balls do not answer. Please send us a ball in the Spring. Would it not be less expensive for the type to be cast in England, and sent out to us as we need it? We are engaged at present in taking off about 300 impressions of St. John's Gospel.³¹

No.15: The Gospel according to St. John in the Cree Language of Hudson Bay (December, 1851) 54 unnumbered leaves. No title page.

According to the report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for the year ending April, 1852, the press ran off 300 copies.

This is far from sufficient to meet the loudly expressed wishes of the people.

On opposite page - Item 15 (cf. item 21 illus. on p. [34])

Iskewajew
William Hudson
A GRAMMAR

OF THE
CREE LANGUAGE;

WITH WHICH IS COMBINED

AN ANALYSIS

OF THE

CHIPPEWAY DIALECT.

By JOSEPH HOWSE, Esq. F.R.G.S.

AND RESIDENT TWENTY YEARS IN PRINCE ROBERT'S LAND, IN THE
SERVICE OF THE HON HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

LONDON:

J. G. F. & J. RIVINGTON,

ST PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE, Pall Mall.

—
1844.

James C. Pilling lists this copy as being in the British and Foreign Bible Society's library. The copy bears a manuscript note by Elijah Hoole (a prominent Methodist clergyman) dated London, November 23, 1852, which says "This book was executed 1851, by the Rev W. Mason."

From York Factory, where he had awaited the arrival of the annual supply ship, Mr. Mason on August 13, 1852, wrote a covering letter with a copy of the Gospel sent to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society.

Dear Sir I take the liberty of forwarding to your address for acceptance a copy of St. John's Gospel, translated into Cree, and printed in the Indian character at the Wesleyan Mission Press, Roseville.

The typographical part is not quite so good as I could wish, owing to the want of an ink ball.

But the translation has been pronounced good by some of the most competent judges to whose inspection it has been submitted. The desire of the Indians for the word of God in their own language and in the syllabic characters which they soon learn to read is very great, and I sincerely hope and earnestly pray that the entire New Testament may as soon as possible be put in their hands. It is the best preservation against errors both in doctrine and practice, and yields the richest sources of consolation to immortal souls.

You will excuse the liberty I have taken in presenting to you one of our first efforts in diffusing Gospel light by means of the press amongst the poor scattered tribes of North America for whom spiritual welfare I know you feel an earnest solicitude.⁴⁰

Two years later Mason printed a revised edition which in proper sequence should be No. 18 but which is listed next for convenience.

No.16: The Gospel according to St. John (December, 1853)
53 unnumbered leaves. No title page.

The printer in a letter dated December 23, 1853, wrote of the new edition:

A 2'	166	he is.
A A ²	A'p ²	he sits.
< P d	P ² aseko	he rises (from a sitting posture).
A r p	P ² imasin	he lies down.
A p ² v	W ² imaseko	he rises (from a recumbent posture).
A' < A	N ² epowee	he stands.
A A	W ² ip ²	he sees.
A v ² A	S ² eethoyat ²	he departs.
A A A	P ² emootay ²	he walks.
A r p	P ² imethow	he flies.
A r v	P ² imaseko	he swims, as a fish.
A v ² A	T ² hathaw ²	he swims, as a man.
A A A	P ² im ²	he sails.
P v	K ² eway ²	he returns.
A p	P ² oothos	he ceases or leaves off.
A <	N ² ipp ²	he sleeps.
A A	N ² ip ²	he is dead.
A v p	E ² ethet ²	he so thinks, intends.
A p p	K ² ukethet ²	he knows.
A p p	K ² ikias ²	he remembers.

A A v	vi. 2.	M ² ahy ² on (imper.)	depart thou.	A v A v p v A v p
A v A v	xvi. 7	Che m ² ahy ² on	that I depart.	
A A v	v. 8.	P ² imoon ²	walk thou.	
A v A v	v. 9.	K ² e p ² imoon ² (subj.)	he walked.	
A v A v	v. 21.	A ² hos k ² ew ² ad (subj.)	.. as he was returning.	
A p A v	vi. 28.	K ² e sub ² etw ² ad (subj. pass. case.)	they returned back.	
A v A	xi. 11.	N ² ab ² h	he sleepeth.	
A v A	xi. 12.	N ² ab ² hy ² on (subj. dub.)	if he sleep.	
A v A v	vi. 49.	K ² e w ² ethow ²	they have died.	
A v A	xix. 7	Che w ² ethow ² (subj.)	that he die	A v A v A v A v A v
A v A v	xxi. 25.	N ² in ² e ² ukind ²	I think.	
A v A v A v	xvi. 2.	T ² h ² e ² ukind ²	.. he will think.	
A v A v A v	vi. 6.	O ² k ² ekind ²	he knoweth it.	
A v A v A v A v	ix. 2.	N ² in k ² ekind ²	we know it.	
A v A	xv. 20.	M ² eq ² und ² ah ² mo ² (imper.)	remember ye.	
A v A v A v	xvi. 4	Che m ² eq ² und ² ah ² mo ² (subj.)	that ye remember	

A page of Mason's copy of Howse's Grammar.
Marginal script presumably by his wife Sophia.

*We have just finished a 2nd edition of our translation of St. John's Gospel, 400 copies. It has been carefully revised, and is a great improvement on our 1st edition.*⁴¹

The first page contains ten verses, whereas the earlier edition has seven verses and part of the eighth. The copy in the British and Foreign Bible Society examined by Pilling had the manuscript note "To be printed in England. A dot to be placed over the broad characters to denote the long vowel sound. W. Mason, Hudson's Bay York Factory, Sept. 11th, 1856."⁴²

A copy in the Archives of British Columbia has fifty two pages. Slight differences in pagination of copies of a Rossville title does not indicate a separate edition but rather that the binding was done at different times. Thus Mason's journal, while he was stationed at York under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society, contains references to stitching and binding copies of the Rossville press imprints. These had been received and stored as loose sheets. On October 7, 1856, he speaks of binding eleven copies of St. John's Gospel,

*the last of 1000 copies I printed a few years ago. They were kindly sent to me by the Rev. T Hurlburt*⁴³

Earlier in the 1853 season, Mason recorded in his journal the printing of a hymnal and a prayer book.

No.17: Hymn Book 3rd edition. (Spring, 1853)

In a letter dated August 18, the missionary said that the number of hymns had been increased from the fifty in the 1846 edition to ninety, and that 1080 impressions had been printed. The British Museum in its catalogue describes a Cree hymn book, no doubt the above publication but said to contain 96 hymns. This copy is without title page and has no pagination. (The copy in the Methodist Missionary Society Archives in London is said to have 163 pages.) The translators are supposed to have been Mrs. Jane Hunter, Reverend H.B. Steinhawer, and Peter Erasmus.

Copies of this hymn book remained in print as late as 1856, according to Mason's journal. On October 17, Mason wrote:

This morning we finish cutting the last of our hymn books. As these are the only remaining copies, and as there is no probability of obtaining more in this country etc

(The following year one of the Reverend Thomas Hurlburt's last acts before leaving Rossville to return East to Canada was to dispatch to Mason a box of books which included copies of the hymn book.)

No.18 Prayer Book (Spring, 1853)

Five hundred copies were printed.

The last production of the Rossville press under Mr. Mason's superintendency was a piece of job printing - a hymn book - for the Reverend James Hunter, the Church of England missionary at Cumberland Station. As mentioned earlier, this clergyman had married Jane Ross of Norway House, which was three miles from the Rossville Mission. Like Mrs. Mason, Mrs. Hunter had learned Cree in childhood, and likewise was a helpmate to her husband in his translating of religious literature into the Cree language. The Hunters originally used the Roman alphabet rather than the syllabic characters. About this date they were converted to the use of the syllabic.

No.19: Hunter, Mrs. Jane.

Hymns in Cree (Summer, 1853) 172 p. 13 cm.

Mr. Mason wrote as follows:

The Bishop of Rupert's Land has become an advocate of the syllabic characters. The hymns used in the Cumberland station by Rev. James Hunter are now in the Press, and he wishes to pay the entire cost.⁴⁴

Bishop Anderson, first Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land, and a man whom Mr. Mason admired for his learning and piety, had earlier rejected the script in favour of the Roman alphabet and the orthography used by Hunter. Even

Mason, in the period 1852-54, had fleeting doubts that the syllabic script was the best system of translating into Cree. It is interesting to read two letters by Mason relative to the syllabic characters. The first letter, dated September 12, 1854, was addressed to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, and reads in part

Before I conclude it will perhaps be advisable for me to say a few words regarding the printing of books in the syllabic character. I do think that for grammatical and philological purposes the Roman characters are decidedly the best. I have been confirmed in this opinion since reading the Church Missionary Intelligencer for March, 1853. The roots of the Cree words are closed, and not open syllables, and many words require double consonants to pronounce them correctly. In writing or printing with the syllabic characters, you are often obliged to rob one syllable of a consonant and give it to the following vowel to which it does not belong. And it is utterly impossible to spell proper names by them. My translation of the New Testament is underlined with Roman letters to assist me in making out what characters were intended to express . . .

The Revd Thomas Hartburn whose extensive knowledge of Indian deserves notice, regrets that the syllabic system was ever adopted, and thinks they are very defective & insufficient, and should be permitted to fall into disuse. I cannot go so far as this, for the sake of those Indians who have not the opportunity of being taught at the mission stations. [The writer then gives support to Archdeacon Hunter's system of translating using the Roman alphabet.]⁴⁸

A year later, on September 20, 1855, Mason again wrote to the same correspondents. He has been to Severn where he has met Indians who have taught themselves to read the syllabic script.

There [at Severn] without ever seeing a missionary teacher they have made the greatest proficiency in reading & writing the syllabic characters, and I can assure you that my mind was very much distressed when I was not able to comply with their request this summer

for books in those characters. It is truly astonishing how extensively these characters are used, with what ease the Indian becomes master of their sounds, and how well adapted they are both in his circumstances & his language. Thus hundreds of poor wandering Indians by the means of these characters are able to read God's word, who would otherwise be left under the darkness & ignorance of heathenism.

. It is my firm belief that the present generation will never read any other than the syllabic characters. I am daily solicited for books in the syllabic characters and I do feel very sorry that I cannot supply their wants. The rapid and astonishing progress of the Gospel in these parts I attribute almost entirely to God's word, printed in their own characters.⁴⁶

From this time forward Mason was convinced of the superiority of syllabic script as the system of writing most suitable for bringing the message of the Scriptures to the Indians. In his journals he frequently complained of a lack of books to give to Indians and in his letters he urged the translation and printing of religious teachings.

Bishop Anderson also had had the experience of meeting with Indians who had taught themselves to read the syllabic and who had in their possession some of the Roseville publications. He now lent his support to the syllabic script.

I cannot be blind to what I have witnessed last year in St James Bay, and this summer on the Saskatchewan and English River. The Indian will read the few leaves, the small portable volume, marked with these characters; - in this the word of life is intelligent to him, and shall we then withhold from him "the leaves which are for the healing of the nations" in the shape through which he finds the readiest access to Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life," that "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world?"⁴⁷

Mr Mason as printer had his moments of satisfaction, as when he saw another booklet off the press and found the

Indians eager for copies.

The press in this country [he wrote] is destined to be the instrument of effecting a glorious change among the hundreds of benighted Haidian who are dependent on hunting for a precarious living.⁴⁸

And so the press was.

The Reverend William Mason ended his association with the Rossville Mission in 1854. In that year the English Wesleyan Missionary Society withdrew from Rupert's Land, turning the responsibility of its missions over to the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist Church. In consequence of this change Mr. Mason resigned from the church, but as he wished to remain in mission work he rejoined the Church of England and was assigned to York Factory. Here he remained for many years, except for a furlough in England. With his successor at Rossville he maintained cordial relations, and often received books from that press.

Prior to the change of supervision from the English to the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist church, there were rumours that the Methodists would withdraw entirely. The Bishop of Rupert's Land hoped that he might negotiate for Rossville Mission, or at least for the press, whose value he appreciated. He proposed that, if it were acquired by the Church Missionary Society, a capable young printer should be sent from England to operate the press.

The new director of the Methodist mission at Rossville was the Reverend Thomas Hurlburt, an outstanding linguist with an aptitude for grasping the intricacies of Indian languages. He took over his duties as superintendent of Methodist missions in the summer of 1854. Writing at an undetermined date Hurlburt described the press he took over.

Printing office in disorder have examined 10,000 syllabic characters and struck off the Ten Commandments. I send you a copy. I can now print Chippewa, Cree and English all the books we want, when I get

2004-05-14

Figure 1

CACI

ΔΗ. ΔΟΥΔΑΚΗΣ

2 7 D d 4 4 7 b b p A 7 4 7 4 L O D =

3 Δ.γ b: pγ° qb. pDPC; Lδ Δ.γ ∇b
 ∇Δ: C, QL qb bC p, DPCb Uo b: p, DPC
 (bT).

4 Δ.7 P=ALNPD-σΔ. ΓQ Lb ALN-
PΔ. P=Δ-4-bLb. ΔΔΔσΔ.

5-47PΔ: Lb Phb-U Δ-ONΛ-bx Lb
Δ-ONΛ-bx QLA: PPhqz.CJLb).

6. P1030, 10420, P4L030, b-P1VΔP2
071030, 10420, P4L030, b-P1VΔP2

[illegible]

8 QLA-7 Δ-7 P=Q Δ-10 ΔOL Δ-47 PΔ-1
Lb P=V ΔP N H Δ-10 P=V P ΔDC ΔOL Δ-1
47 PΔ-1

9. $\nabla D^{\delta} \Delta H \cdot C.V. \triangleleft \nabla H \Delta^{\delta}, \Delta \nabla H \delta C \cdot$
 $C^{\delta} \triangleleft \nabla H \delta C \triangleleft \nabla H \delta C \cdot \nabla H \delta C \triangleleft \nabla H \delta C \cdot$

$$10 \triangleleft p_x \Delta h_1 p_0 \triangleleft p_0, \Delta \cdot \gamma L b p_1 \triangleleft p_1 \cdot C_0$$

II P-VQU, b-NVZ, Lb QLAZ, P-

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{L6 } C \rightarrow A \cdot P \Delta \cap \sigma d, \nabla D \sigma d, b \cdot P \cdot F \\ & \quad b \cdot P \cdot \nabla A + \Delta \cdot b C \Delta G \leftarrow H \cdot H \sigma d, P \\ & \text{L7 } \sigma d \leftarrow \Delta \sigma \Delta \cap \Gamma b \cdot CV \leftarrow CF \Delta, D \\ & \quad \cap \sigma d, b \Delta \Lambda \cdot Q \end{aligned}$$
[illegible]

14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000 1001 1002 1003 1004 1005 1006 1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024 1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 1042 1043 1044 1045 1046 1

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The supply ship of 1854 brought the press a consignment of paper to replenish the supplies which had been exhausted by the flurry of printing in the previous year. Mr. Mason wrote from York on September 12th, 1854:

*The British & Foreign Bible Society has kindly sent out 25 reams of paper to my address for the express purpose of printing another edition of St. John's Gospel, and other portions of God's Word I may have prepared in the syllabic character; 13 reams for 1000 of St. John, and 10 for any other portion of the word of God. The paper still remains here, but considering the grant was made to me in my former capacity (a Wesleyan minister) I, of course, handed it over with the other property belonging to that Society to the Rev. Mr. Ryerson, and I hope they will carry on the printing of God's word in the syllabic character for the reason expressed above - that the poor Indian fur hunter may be enlightened with the light of life and Gospel truth more abundantly and extensively diffused.*⁵⁰

No.20: Ten Commandments 1855 Text in Cree syllabic and in English. 1 foolscap page. 45 cm.

Confirmation that the Commandments were Huriburt's first printing comes from Mason's journal for February 12, 1856.

The Commandments were kindly sent to me by Mr. T. Huriburt of Rosville and are his first attempt at printing.

A copy of this imprint is in the Newberry Library.

No.21: Gospel of St. John in the Cree language 3rd edition. Colophon: Rosville Mission Press, 1857. 75 p. No title page. Text in syllabic characters; colophon in Roman alphabet.

Pilling located a copy of this volume in the British and Foreign Bible Society's Library.

Illustrated on opposite page -- Item 21.

Item 20 – Ten Commandments.

No.22. Epistles in the Cree language Colophon Rossville Mission Press, 1857 40 p. No title page. Text in syllabic characters, colophon in Roman alphabet.

The Epistles were Ephesians, James, II Peter, and I John Pilling, who located this title also in the British and Foreign Bible Society's library, attributes the translation to Mason. The latter, in his journal for July 9, 1857, speaks of receiving from Rossville, along with 50 hymn books and 100 St. John's Gospels, 100 copies of the "four epistles which he (Hurlburt) had printed last winter". During 1856 Mason's journal refers to Mrs. Mason at work translating I John and James.

The Canadian Wesleyan Missionary Society in its report for the year 1857-58 provides the following information about Mr. Hurlburt's printing operations at Rossville

... he, after much application, in translating and mechanical matters, assisted by an Esquimaux pressman, has made the Society's small and somewhat rude printing establishment at Rosville very serviceable one of the Gospels and the four Epistles having been printed in the syllabic character, to the extent of three thousand copies, the stitching and binding of which were willingly undertaken by Miss Adams, the devoted school teacher.

Mr. Mason's journal entry for July 9, 1857 tells of Hurlburt's return East to Canada. (When Mr. Hurlburt sent the box of books to Mason, the Indian boatmen left the box on the beach at Rossville. The books, which were in sheets, arrived at York Factory two weeks later.)

With the Reverend Thomas Hurlburt's departure from Rossville, the mission press fell into disuse.

Meantime, the Reverend William Mason, now Church of England chaplain at York Factory, hoped to resume his printing activities and asked that a press be sent out from England. The supply ship of 1857 landed a printing press on the beach at York Factory. He went down to look at it, and wrote that he planned to work at printing during the winter

Mr Gardiner, who assisted him, was an excellent printer, Mason said.⁸¹

Two weeks later Mason opened the case, and suffered disappointment.

We opened the case containing the printing press, but found no syllabic type nor any printing paper sent out. The want of which renders the press entirely useless, as these materials are not to be had here. It has received considerable damage. The handle is broken, as well as the iron frame with other minor parts which very likely can be mended by the blacksmith here. We repacked it in the same box in which it will remain until printing paper & syllabic type can be got out from England.⁸²

Discouraged by the difficulties of operating a hand press in the wilderness, Mr Mason and his wife Sophia with their family sailed for England in the autumn of 1858. They carried with them in manuscript form drafts of most of the Bible in the syllabic characters.

When the New Testament appeared in London in 1859, and the whole Bible in 1861, the title pages bore only one name as translator, that of "William Mason, minister." According to Methodist sources the two native missionaries stationed at Rossville had translated the Bible into Cree; John Sinclair, the Old Testament to Esther and the New Testament to the end of the Acts of the Apostles, and Henry B. Steinhauer from Job to Malachi and from Acts to Revelation. Methodist missionaries Young and Maclean in their writings were critical of Mason for not acknowledging the assistance of his collaborators at Rossville.

Mason's journal for October to December, 1855, contains references to translating the prophets Hosea, Joel and Amos, the following July and October Mrs. Mason translated Mark, First Epistle of John, and James. However, tradition is probably correct in attributing the first or preliminary translation of most or all of the Bible to Sinclair and Steinhauer. Mason, in writing to Pilling on December 30, 1886, claimed

little more than that "the final revision was the joint work of myself and my wife, Sophia Mason."

Those who were most critical of Mason allowing his name to stand alone on the title page probably did not appreciate what was involved in editing the manuscript for the printer, and in proof-reading the galley sheets as these came off the press. No doubt there would be inconsistencies in grammar and style in the first draft translation. In the possession of the University of Alberta Library is a copy of Joseph Howse's *Grammar of the Cree Language* the 1844 edition, which has been interleaved with note paper and rebound. In this volume, Cree words and phrases have been transliterated into syllabic in a neat hand with a fine pen. On the title page is the name Wm. Mason. This volume was used by the Masons while translating.

The contribution of Mrs. Mason to the translation of the Bible into Cree is not generally known.

Her perfect command and knowledge of the Indian language was invaluable. She entered most willingly into the grand design of giving them the whole of God's revealed will, especially after seeing and hearing the blessed results which followed the dissemination of St. John's Gospel, the first portion of God's word ever printed in Rupert's Land. Most people deem the cares of a family quite enough to employ the time of a female, but the labours of Sophia, notwithstanding her feeble and delicate constitution, were augmented by the Indian day school, visits to the Indian tents, and daily translations, besides having to attend to the wants of a large family.⁴³

That work [translating the Bible] had been slowly advancing under her careful superintendence since 1846. The most competent and best-informed Indians had been from time to time consulted no means without reach were left unemployed. While the husband, the schoolmaster, the interpreter,⁴⁴ and others, laboured by day, Sophia would perhaps be engaged in her household affairs, or attending to the children, or drawing designs for the Indian females to work upon their moccasins, or

which she greatly excelled, and in this way conferred upon them considerable temporal benefits, and then at the close of the day all would be revised by her . her sanction would decide generally any difficulty with respect to the most correct rendering of the passage into Cree.

(In England) in 1859 a severe cold at Holloway rendered necessary her removal to a milder part of London (Brompton), where her health improved, and there she laboured night and day to finish the final revision of the Old Testament, having completed the New in 1859.¹⁸ She would be labouring at the desk until pain in the side compelling her to rise, she would walk up and down the room until it had subsided, and then sit down to her work again.¹⁹

Sophia Mason died in London in October, 1861, just after the Old Testament came off the press. The New Testament had been printed in 1859. The whole Bible was now available to the Indians in Cree syllabic script. This was a fitting culmination to James Evans's invention of a language for the Cree nation, and of the work of translating and printing portions of the Scripture, and other religious literature, by the devoted group who surrounded William Mason at Rossville Mission.

SOURCES AND NOTES

Sources and Notes

1. Nathaniel Burwash, "The Gift to a Nation of a Written Language", *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, ser. 3, V.(1911), section II, p. 6. Quoted from letter, Evans to Rev. Joseph Stinson, June 11th, 1841.
2. The Rev. Egerton R. Young, writing in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine* for November, 1882 (as cited in James C. Pilling, *Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages*, p. 186 Washington, 1891 Series U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin, v. 13) said, "I regret to be unable to reproduce in facsimile this syllabary in its earliest form as used by Mr. Evans or his contemporaries." In 1954 the Bibliographical Society of Canada, as No. 4 of its Facsimile Series, reprinted Evans' twenty-page hymn book of 1841 on the cover of which is the syllabary in what was probably its earliest form.
3. Names, and particularly Old Testament names, were difficult to write in the script. Even the common name George could only be indicated as "Chouch" in Cree script. See letter from Rev. E.A. Watkins to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, July 10, 1853. In Church Missionary Society Records and Correspondence. (Hereafter cited C.M.S.) A microfilm copy is available for consultation in several research libraries in Canada.
4. Extract from a letter and journal, dated August, 1841. "Missionary Notices" in *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (London) 1843, pp. 73-83. (Hereafter cited *W.M. Mag.*) The four quotations which follow in the text are from the same source.
5. Egerton R. Young, *The Apostle of the North*, Rev. James Evans (New York, etc., Revell, c.1899), pp. 188-189.

6. John Maclean, *James Evans, Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Language* (Toronto, Briggs, c 1890), p. 167.
7. Bibliographical Society of Canada, Facsimile Series, No. 4, 1954.
8. Maclean, *op. cit.*, p. 167. Evans' brother informed Maclean that the missionary had burned nearly all his manuscripts before leaving Rossville in 1846.
9. Young, *op. cit.*, p. 192.
10. W.-M. Mag. The four other quotations which follow in the text are from the same source.
11. Burwash, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
12. Letter from Dr Evans to the Rev. John Carroll as published in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine* for October, 1882. Pilling, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
13. Letitia Hargrave, *Letters* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1947), p. 120.
14. For a biography see Maclean's *Henry B. Steinhawer; His Work among the Cree Indians of the Western Plains of Canada* (Toronto, 19 - -).
15. John McLean, *Notes of a twenty-five years service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1932), p. 365.
16. Methodist Missionary Society Archives (London) (Hereafter cited M.M.S.) Box 13, File G. I am indebted to the Rev. E.B. Thorp for searching the Missionary Society Archives for references relating to the Rossville Mission Press.
17. Letter from Mason dated December 22, 1845. *Ibid.*
18. According to the Rev. Thomas Hurlburt, after he took over the press. Letter dated December 26, 1855 M.M.S., Box 17 (1855-57), File G.
19. Letter from Mason dated August 29, 1849. M.M.S., Box 15 (1849-51), File G.

20. Gossip or rumour had it that Evans' relations with one or more of the Indian women at the mission were not confined to spiritual guidance. Some contemporaries who were pro-Evans hinted that the rumours were started by persons who regarded his Christian principles, for instance that Indian canoe-men should not paddle on the Sabbath, as a nuisance. In any case Evans returned to England to answer these rumours before the Methodist Assembly. This writer upon enquiry was informed that the page of the minute book which would have reference to the charge has disappeared, no doubt from the ravages of time. The missionary was apparently cleared of the charge. In the writer's opinion, the missionary was too ill a man by the autumn of 1845 to be interested in liaisons with members of the opposite sex.
21. Of Mr. Evans' illness, Letitia Hargrave wrote in September, 1845, "Mr. Evans is in bad health, a chronic affection of the kidneys. I see no change in him but Harg've says he seems quite broken down."
22. Letters dated December 15, 1846 & June 26, 1847, M.M.S., Box 14, File G.
23. Mason's journal, January 3, 1848. *Ibid.*
24. Letter dated June 26, 1847. *Ibid.*
25. Letter dated January 3, 1852. M.M.S., Box 16 (1852-54), File G.
26. M.M.S., Box 14, File G.
27. Extract from a letter dated August 11, 1848. *W.-M. Mag.* 1850, pp. 329-31.
28. *Ibid.*
29. M.M.S., Box 16 (1852-54), File G.
30. M.M.S., Box 14, File G.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Letter from Mr. Smithurst to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, August 1, 1848. C.M.S.

33. *Ibid.*
34. M.M.S., Box 15 (1849-51), File G.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. Young, *op. cit.*, p. 194. I am inclined to think that an extra zero was inadvertently added to £50 in setting up the type
38. M.M.S., Box 15 (1849-51), File G
39. M.M.S., Box 16 (1852-54), File G
40. C.M.S.
41. Same source as No. 39.
42. Pilling, *op. cit.*, p. 338.
43. C.M.S.
44. Same source as No. 39
45. C.M.S.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Bishop of Rupert's Land to British and Foreign Bible Society. Society's Report for 1854, p. CXXXVIII.
48. Mason's journal, May 31, 1849. *W-M. Mag.*, 1850, p. 334
49. J.E. Sanderson, *The First Century of Methodism in Canada* (Toronto, Briggs, 1910), II, 109.
50. C.M.S.
51. Letter dated September 11, 1857. C.M.S.
52. Letter dated September 25, 1857. C.M.S.
53. Sophia Mason was the mother of nine children, the last born about ten weeks before her death.
54. H.B. Steinhauer and John Sinclair.
55. The first consignment of New Testaments went down with the supply ship "Kitty" which was "nupt in the ice" of Hudson's Strait.

56. *Church Missionary Gleaner*, New Series, XI (1861), pp. 135-140. Contains death notice of Mrs. Mason. In 1880 the Archbishop of Canterbury awarded her husband the degree of Doctor of Divinity in recognition of his work of bringing the Gospel to the Indians of Rupert's Land. Mason died in 1893.

CREE LANGUAGE

ALPHABET.

(a) SYLLABICS.

▽ a	△ é	▷ ô	◁ u*
∨ pā	∧ pē	> pō	< pū
∪ tā	∩ tē	⌋ tō	⌌ tū
∩ chā	∪ chē	⌋ chō	⌌ chū
q kā	ρ kē	đ kō	b kū
ᵀ nā	σ nē	ᵀ nō	ᵀ nū
┐ mā	┌ mē	┐ mō	┌ mū
└ sā	┐ sē	└ sō	┐ sū
↙ yā	↗ yē	↙ yō	↗ yū

* a, as in far.

(a) APPENDAGES.

- = n, as in p/•, it is cold.
- = m, = ∆/•, sun.
- = ā, = a/•, boy.
- = p, = /•, deck.
- = k, = σab/•, he leaves me.
- = t, = ┐/•, tooth.
- = ch, = a^/•, very.
- = w, when placed immediately to the right of a syllable, as in σ•, my wife.
- = i, when placed higher to the right, as in σ^•b', my coat.
- = wī, combining the value of each point as given above, as in qb•, kē-kwī.

- = the rough breathing, or aspirate, as in ∆^d, ashen.
- = a combination of " and •, that is, of the aspirate and k, as in /∆^, at the river,

• = r, as in b/•, Christ.

• = l, = ∇/•, angel.

• = oo, = a/•, man.

When "•" and "•" are placed to the right of a syllable, as in ∆p^q-•, the value of "•" is absorbed by the syllable, while that of "•" is affixed. Written in Roman characters the word ∆p^q-• will illustrate:—pe-kis-kwāco; "w" is within the syllable, and "co" is affixed to it. The value of "•" which appendage must be placed after the syllable it affects, is always absorbed except in the case of ᵀ, △, ▷, ◁, in which, though "•" is affixed in position, its value is prefixed. The above combinations are pronounced, wā, wē, wō, wū. The absorbed and the prefixed values of "•" are met with in the word ∆•∆p^q-• = wā-pe-kis-kwāco, he wishes to speak.

It will be noticed that there are quantities between ∇ and ◁. ∇ and ◁, &c., have full than those given in the Alphabet. When quantities similar to the alphabetical ones are very necessary in the pronunciation of a word, the period "•" is placed directly over the long or broad syllable, σb^•(┐) = nī-kā-kwē-tī-nūn = I shall be in need. ∇d(σt^•) = I shall be there; here the last syllables are "ē" and "yūn," both broad. t^•(┐) = where you are. The last "•" is not broad, kē-kwī-yūn.

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